

# Veteran Evansville Radio 'Ham' Recalls Highlights in Career at Tri-State Parley

By JOE AARON

The OM's bundled up their XYLs, their YLs and their Junior Ops yesterday and attended an Evansville "hamfest" which drew 185 amateur radio enthusiasts from eight states.

AUG 1955

And if you could have heard some of the discussions they carried on, while they picnicked and relaxed in the shady peacefulness of Bauer's Grove, you would have sworn the international language of the ham is more remote to the uninitiated than "pig latin".

## Eighth Annual 'Hamfest'

They split up into little groups and you could hear them muttering "QTH" and "QRX" and "QSY" throughout the afternoon. Then, they said, "BCNUL," and they hopped into their cars and went home.

It was the eighth annual "ham-

fest" of the Tri-State Amateur Radio Society.

Dean of the group—and still as enthusiastic as the youngest TARS member—was W. C. Baker of 3206 W. Virginia St., an employee of the telephone company.

Baker, a stocky, soft-voiced ham whose voice has raced around the world several times in the 41 years he has been fooling around with radio, said there were no government regulations to fiddle with in 1913, "as long as you didn't blow the main fuse at the power house. I even managed to do that once."

Starting out with a coil-crystal set with limited range, Baker—who makes all his equipment—has worked up to a transmitter-receiver combination which can reach out across the oceans and bring hams into his home for an international chat.

Baker said he has talked—both by voice and code—to radio enthusiasts all over Europe, Australia and South Africa.

Biggest thrill of his hobby has brought him, Baker said, was in helping out during a bad earthquake on the West Coast in 1938. Stumbling onto a distress signal from a California ham while idly twirling the dial on his receiver, Baker worked from early evening until 4 a.m., relaying messages

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**Old Timers:** Harry Smith, (left) of Indianapolis and W. C. Baker, 3206 W. Virginia St., two of the oldest old timers at the Tri-State Amateur Radio Society "hamfest" at Bauer's Grove yesterday, do what they've been doing a long time. They sit in front of a ham radio set and join in the give-and-take of an airwaves

from 'quake victims to relatives back East.

Although his enthusiasm has never waned and he still averages 15 hours a week before his set, amateur radio is strictly a one-man craze in the Baker family.

## Wife's Not Interested

His wife doesn't have much truck with all the "dit-da-dit-dadds," Baker said, and "She's been sure since she married me 33 years ago that I'm crazy."

A World War I veteran, Baker said no hams were operating during either world war. "They were all working for a guy called Uncle." He also confided, "I told her I was a wireless operator, so they put me in the infantry."

Another old-timer at the annual

a letter of praise he got from Herbert Hoover, Secretary of Commerce in 1924, for radioing news to newspapers in Minneapolis and St. Paul while the Twin Cities were paralyzed and isolated by a blizzard.

He said it was the day they buried Woodrow Wilson.

The "hamfest"—attended by enthusiasts from Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, California, Texas, Michigan, Missouri and Washington—is a day of fun and cheer spent with the fellows you have been QSOing (chirping) with for the past year.

## Equipment Judged

It was a day of games, prizes and judging of commercial and homemade mobile equipment. Winners in the commercial division were Earl Jagoe, Owensboro, Ky., and George Sheddlebauer, Mt. Car-

On display throughout the day was a mobile "disaster unit"—a house trailer which TARS bought and equipped with complete radio facilities.

The unit had a practical value at the "hamfest." It was used to direct out-of-town hams to the Bauer's Grove location.

Attending the event were Harry M. Matthews, Springfield, Ill., central division director of the American Radio Relay League; George Graue, Ft. Wayne, sectional communications manager for Indiana, and Harold Echelbarger, Indianapolis, assistant director of communications for the State Department of Civil Defense.

Oh, incidentally, OM is "old man" and the code name for any ham whether he's 12 or 112. YL is



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Another old-timer at the annual get-together was Harry Smith of Indianapolis, who spent much of the day discussing old ham happenings with Baker.

A ham since 1920, Smith tells of

a letter of praise he got from Herbert Hoover, Secretary of Commerce in 1924, for radioing news to newspapers in Minneapolis and St. Paul while the Twin Cities were paralyzed and isolated by a blizzard.

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Oh, incidentally, OM is "old man" and the code name for any ham, whether he's 12 or 112. YL is young lady. XYL is married lady. XYL used to be OW, meaning you-know-what.

But the old women didn't like it.

## Radio Society Aug Has Hamfest 1955

Radio hams from as far away as the state of Washington gathered at Bauer's Grove yesterday for the Tri-State Amateur Radio Society's eighth annual "hamfest."

There were 185 attending the meeting to personally meet the people they have been talking with on their sets. They came from Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, California, Texas, Michigan, Missouri and Washington.

Besides having games and food, the group talked shop. Guests included Harry M. Matthews, Springfield, Ill., central division director of the American Radio Relay League; George Graue, Ft. Wayne, sectional communications manager for Indiana, and Gerold Echelbarger, Indianapolis, assistant director of communications for the State Department of Civil Defense.